

## **Progress Band Report 2010/11**

This year has seen continued progress in many areas but also a loss of some key players since Christmas due to a variety of non-band reasons. The current playing strength is weaker than for the last couple of years.

The year started well under the direction of Chris Mackey who brought discipline and ambition to the band. Our performance at the Croydon Music Festival competition was duly commended and a full gig programme of eight events allowed the improving standards to be displayed to a wider audience, albeit with some help from outside and some main band players to whom we are most grateful.

Unfortunately Chris Mackey had to resign at Christmas due to the need to pursue alternative work but we have been extremely fortunate that Dave Howells has taken over as MD and he is rebuilding the band around the current players. We are most grateful for his efforts on our behalf and also to Richard and Adam who support every week. Richard has also taken on the library function alongside that of the main band.

During the year our improved standards made it necessary to split our already limited rehearsal time between our 'Academy' for beginner players and the main Progress Band practice for those with intermediate skills. This has not worked well due to the inconvenience re work commitments so early in the evening and the sheer lack of overall time. Consequently our ambition for this coming year is to find a full 1.5 hours for the Progress Band practice and separate the Academy into a more flexible group that can be supported and mentored by existing players. This has implications for rehearsal venue and/or day and will need consideration by the committee.

The Progress Band will continue with its purpose of enjoying making music together in the Brass Band tradition whilst improving our skills. We will be mounting a campaign to attract new players during the year, both beginners and intermediate, including those returning to blowing a brass instrument after a long gap! We will enjoy a more limited gig programme than last year as this gives purpose to the group whilst not over taxing availability. Hopefully some players will also reach a standard to fill vacancies in the main band.

David Charlesworth